

A Few Things to Remember...



Snapchat

Privacy Settings

By default, only 'Friends' you've added on Snapchat can contact you directly or view your Story.

Snapchat Privacy Settings:

<https://support.snapchat.com/en-US/a/privacy-settings2>

Snaps disappear, but... a friend can still grab a screenshot or take a picture of your snap with another device. There are other apps designed to screenshot snaps without letting users know their image has been copied.

Location Sharing Options

When you open Snap Map for the first time, you'll get a prompt to choose who you'd like to share your location with. Your location should always be on Only Me (Ghost Mode): Your location won't be visible to anyone else on the Map! When you're in Ghost Mode, your Bitmoji will hold up a blue sign with a 🗿 icon.

Instagram

Privacy Settings

Instagram profiles default to public profiles. This means users need to manually go into their settings and switch their profiles to private. Private accounts mean content can't be seen by anyone users haven't approved. If an account is set to private, only approved followers will be able to see posts users shared, and photos and videos from users' stories won't appear on hashtag or location pages. If it is public, anyone can see the content users post on Stories, Feed, or Live, and can follow them without needing approval. If a profile is already public, users can switch to private at any time.

Instagram Privacy Settings:

<https://help.instagram.com/196883487377501>

Only approve follow requests from people you know personally.

Location Sharing Options

When creating a new post, Instagram allows users to add their location to any of their posts that can then be found on a map. You can turn this feature off.

Tagged Photos or Videos

Instagram users can tag other users in photos or videos, these

will appear on the tagged user's profile. Who can see these tags depends on the privacy settings.

Posts are Private: Only confirmed followers can see photos and videos the user is tagged in on their profile.

Posts are Public: Anyone can see photos and videos the user is tagged in on their profile.

Users can hide photos and videos they're tagged in from their profile or remove the tag if the user doesn't want anyone to see them. Users can also choose to manually approve photos and videos they're tagged in before they appear on a user's profile.

Facebook

Privacy Settings

Facebook's privacy shortcuts give users quick access to some of the most widely used privacy settings and tools such as:

- Who can see my stuff?
- Who can contact me?
- How do I stop someone from bothering me?

This is also where users will find the latest privacy updates and other helpful tools.

Facebook Privacy Settings:

<https://www.facebook.com/help/325807937506242>

Review Posts

Users can turn on the option to review posts before they appear on their timeline.

Timeline review lets users choose whether posts they're tagged in appear on their Timeline. Keep in mind that posts users are tagged in can also appear in the News Feed, show up in searches and other places on Facebook.

When people users are not friends with are tagged in a post, they automatically go to Timeline review. Users can also review tags by friends; turn on Timeline review for tags from anyone.

Resources

UK Safer Internet Center. (2017). Privacy and Safety Checklist Resources Snapchat. Retrieved from <https://www.snapchat.com/l/en-gb/safety>

UK Safer Internet Center. (2017). Privacy and Safety Checklist Resources Facebook. Retrieved from <https://swgfl.org.uk/assets/documents/facebook-checklist.pdf>

UK Safer Internet Center. (2017). Privacy and Safety Checklist Resources Instagram. Retrieved from <https://swgfl.org.uk/online-safety/resources/social-media-checklists/instagram-checklist/>

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Youth in Care and Social Media Use

Best Practices for Caregivers



It is important for caregivers to help keep youth safe online by learning how youth are using social media, what normative social media use looks like for them, and how to talk about social media with them. Youth in foster care report higher rates of inappropriate contact online than other youth; including contact from child predators, and cyberbullying (The Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2017). Youth in care can also experience many benefits from being online. Here are some best practices for caregivers:

Be open minded, positive, and understanding

Focusing only on the dangers of social media will make youth less likely to come forward if things go wrong online.

- Approach the topic in a positive way with interest in what they are doing and with respect for their knowledge of technology, as opposed to always “checking up” on them.
- Youth aren’t perfect and mistakes are likely to happen. If you are able to respond with care and trust, they will be more likely to come to you with questions in the future. Youth report that the main reason they did not come forward when something happened online was because they were afraid their phones or computers would be taken away.
- Look at social media sites together and invite them to teach you about social media, ask questions, and allow them to be the experts.
- Never tease or make fun of anything you read that they have written or posted.

Ask youth why they want to use social media

Some of their reasons might include:

- Connecting with foster siblings, biological siblings, previous social worker or previous caregivers
- Expressing themselves
- Connecting with other youth in care going through similar situations
- Gaining a sense of normalcy/fit in with peers

Monitoring youth use

Unfortunately, there is no “one size fits all” approach. How you monitor social media will depend on 1) youth age, 2) youth’s previous online behavior, 3) youth’s maturity, and 4) devices and apps they are using. Some general rules for monitoring are listed below.



• Secure Settings

- » Remind youth to use settings on their social media profiles as private as possible (for example changing profiles to private or sharing posts with friends only).
- » Some applications such as the “Snapchat map” or “Facebook post locations” tracks users locations. It is important to ensure these features are turned off.
- » For younger youth, caregivers should keep track of their passwords and remind them that they are able to monitor their activities.

• Establish Ground Rules

- » Establish rules about the frequency of social media use and which platforms (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, etc.) youth are allowed to use.
- » Talk about what kinds of information should not be given out, including personal details (full name, address, phone number, or information that would allow strangers to find their physical location; social security number; pictures that could lead to identification of self, family, or friends such as name of school; and financial information).

• Don’t be Fooled

- » Youth may have more than one social media account on the same platform, for example two Snapchat accounts.
- » Finstagrams (or fake Instagrams) are accounts where youth post inappropriate photos and videos they do not want caregivers, schools, or jobs to see—keeping the privacy settings strict.

- For Home Computers

- » Place the computer in a common area where everyone has access to it, and where you can easily see what the youth is doing.
- » Check the history of what social media sites have been accessed OR check the history of what social media sites youth have been accessing.
- » Install protective software for blocking, monitoring, or filtering websites. Set protections so they can't download apps without your approval.

- Learn the lingo

- » Knowing everything about all social networking sites may seem like an impossible task. **We have put together lists of popular texting phrases and applications to help you learn the sites and the language youth use on social networking sites.**
- » It may help to join the social networking sites youth are using to become familiar with these sites and help with monitoring.

The internet is forever

Talk with youth about the lasting effects of what they put on social media. Once something is posted online, even if you think you have deleted it, it can still be found. You never know who saw it or saved a copy while it was up.

- Apps, such as Snapchat, have “self-destructing” features where the picture or text will disappear after a few seconds. Some youth falsely believe that once the image is gone that it is gone forever.
- There are inconspicuous apps, such as apps disguised with a calculator icon that can take and store photos without the sender knowing. See our dangerous app guide z.umn.edu/dangerous-apps.

Biological families.

If a youth is not allowed to be in contact with certain family members it is important to be clear with them about that, and help them understand the potential consequences of online contact.

- Talk about what it would be like to be found by or to search for biological family members online. FosterClub found that 64% of youth in foster care would have liked mentoring either before or during reconnection with family members.
- It is important that caregivers and others in the home do not share information about or images of the youth online. It could be easy for someone to follow the trail to the youth's profile.

Conversation starters

Getting a conversation started can seem like a terrifying task. Here are some conversation starters:

- What would you do if someone you didn't know sent you a friend request?
- Do kids at your school use ___ app?
- Do any of your friends go into chatrooms?
- What would you tell a friend who wanted to meet someone they met online in person?
- Can you show me some of the filters on Snapchat?
- How would it make you feel if (biological family member) contacted you online?

Summary

When used responsibly, the benefits that youth in care gain from being on social media greatly outweigh the risks. Things will not go perfectly after just one talk; caregivers and youth need to learn together. See the Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat links in the related resources section for help on how to adjust location settings.

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Youth in Care and Social Media Use

Best Practices for Youth



We know that being on social media is important for you. In fact, there can be many benefits to being on social media. However, there are also risks. Below are important guidelines to keep you safe.

Keep profiles private

The default setting for some social media sites are already set to friends only. However other sites (Facebook and Instagram) are automatically set to public. Learn how to adjust your privacy settings for each site.

- See the Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat links in the related resources section for help.

Only talk to people you know

This includes not accepting friend requests or follow requests from people you do not know personally, even if they claim to be a friend of a friend. You never know who someone really is online. It is very easy for an adult who is not safe to be around to pretend to be younger online.

Be careful of what you write

It is easy to say things we do not mean online, talking to someone online is different than talking to them in person. It may be easier to tell someone things about yourself online since they are not right in front of you.

It can also be easier to say mean or hurtful things online where we cannot see how our words may affect people. A good rule to follow: if you wouldn't say it in person you should not say it online.

Biological families

If you are not allowed to be in contact with certain family members it is important to understand why and what might happen if you are.

- Use a fake name or abbreviations instead of putting first and last names online.

- If someone does contact you, be sure to let your social worker or caregiver know.

Do not share your location

Some apps, like the Snapchat map or Facebook post locations, tracks users locations for friends or anyone else to see. It is important to make sure these features are turned off.

Do not allow photo tags

Some sites allow users to 'tag' or link an image to the people in the photo. This is a very easy way for you to be found.

The internet is forever

Once something is posted online, even if you think you have deleted it, it can still be found. You never know who saw it or saved a copy while it was up.

- Apps, such as Snapchat, have "self-destructing" features where the picture or text will disappear after a few seconds. Don't be fooled, once an image is gone it is not gone forever. There are apps that can take and store photos without the sender knowing.
- Youth should be aware that in some states, sending or being in possession of "nudes" of underage youth (either themselves or others) is considered creating or distributing child pornography and can be punishable by law.

General safety tips

- Never agree to meet someone in person you have met online.
- Stay away from chat rooms or discussion groups that look sketchy. Trust your instincts, if it seems risky or makes you feel uncomfortable, stay away.
- Log off, close a browser window, or navigate away if something online doesn't seem right or makes you feel uncomfortable.

- Be wary of people who start asking too many questions about your personal life or want personal information.
- Never give out passwords, even to friends.
- If someone is bothering you or making you feel uncomfortable block them and report their profile or username to that platform.

Summary

When social media is used safely the benefits you experience can be greater than the risks. Talk to a caregiver or social worker if something happens online that makes you feel uncomfortable or upset. Don't be afraid to ask questions and discuss social media at home. You may know more about apps, trends, and social media than your social worker and caregivers—be their teacher, they want to learn from you and be able to support you.

References and Resources

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Youth in Care and Social Media Use

A Training Activity



The following scenarios represent examples of the unique experiences youth in foster care may have when online. It is important to not only think of the youth's behavior but also how the caregivers are responding. Use the prompts as discussion points with other professionals as well as for guidance should these scenarios arise.

Discussion Questions

Use these discussion questions to help guide professionals through the scenarios.

- What questions would you ask the caregiver and/or youth?
- What advice would you give to the youth?
- What advice would you give to the caregiver?
- How might the youth react to their rules? What other rules could you try?
- Are there things the caregivers could have done differently?

Working with Caregivers

Scenario #1

A caregiver was cleaning in their youth's room while they were at school and a message notification popped up on their computer. The caregiver immediately recognized the name of the youth's biological parent, who they are not supposed to have contact with. The caregiver called me and expressed her

concern about the contact and the youth not getting hurt again.

*It is possible for youth in foster care to be found online by family members they may not be allowed to have contact with. The **Best Practices** sections will go over strategies to minimize this risk.*

Scenario #2

A caregiver I work with requested to connect with me on Facebook. On their profile it lists that they are a foster parent and they have photos of the youth on their social media page. I was also able to find the youth's Facebook profile since the caregiver has them tagged in several photos and posts.

1. *Your state, agency, or department may have specific social media rules for workers, check your specific social media policies for guidelines on friending families.*
2. *As a general rule, caregivers should not post that they are a foster parent, the youth's name, or photos of the youth. This can make the youth easily identifiable online and can create a direct trail to them that can be used by family members who are not allowed to have contact and by online predators who would know their situation.*

Scenario #3

Several of the caregivers I work with have discussed having a strict no social media policy for all of the youth in their care. They do not allow the youth on any social media platforms. They think it's too dangerous and that predators will contact them or they will be exploited in some other way.

Youth in foster care can experience many benefits from being online such as connecting with others who are like them, building community with other youth or friends they have moved away from, and having more opportunities for self-expression. However, they do face certain risks. The risks and ways caregivers can help keep youth safe online will be discussed more in the **Best Practices** section.

Working with Youth in Care

Scenario #4

A youth on my caseload has asked for their own computer. They have expressed interest in a career in Information Technology (IT) and are taking a computer programming class at school. When they asked their caregivers for a computer they said they knew what they really wanted the computer for and would get into trouble online. The student needs their own laptop to join the robotics club at school.

Computers are becoming increasingly necessary in the world of students. A 'digital divide' exists between youth in foster care and other students on the necessary computer skills they have and may need in the future (both at universities and in the work world). More information on the digital divide can be found in the research summary from **part 3** of this training.

Scenario #5

While checking in with a youth on my caseload, she mentioned being on a messaging app that lets her talk to people from all over the world. When I asked her more about the app she says it is safe since it's designed for youth only.

It is important to remind youth that anyone can create an account and set up a profile and lie about their age. Remind them that just because an app is designed for young people, it does not mean there aren't adults using the app or pretending to be younger.

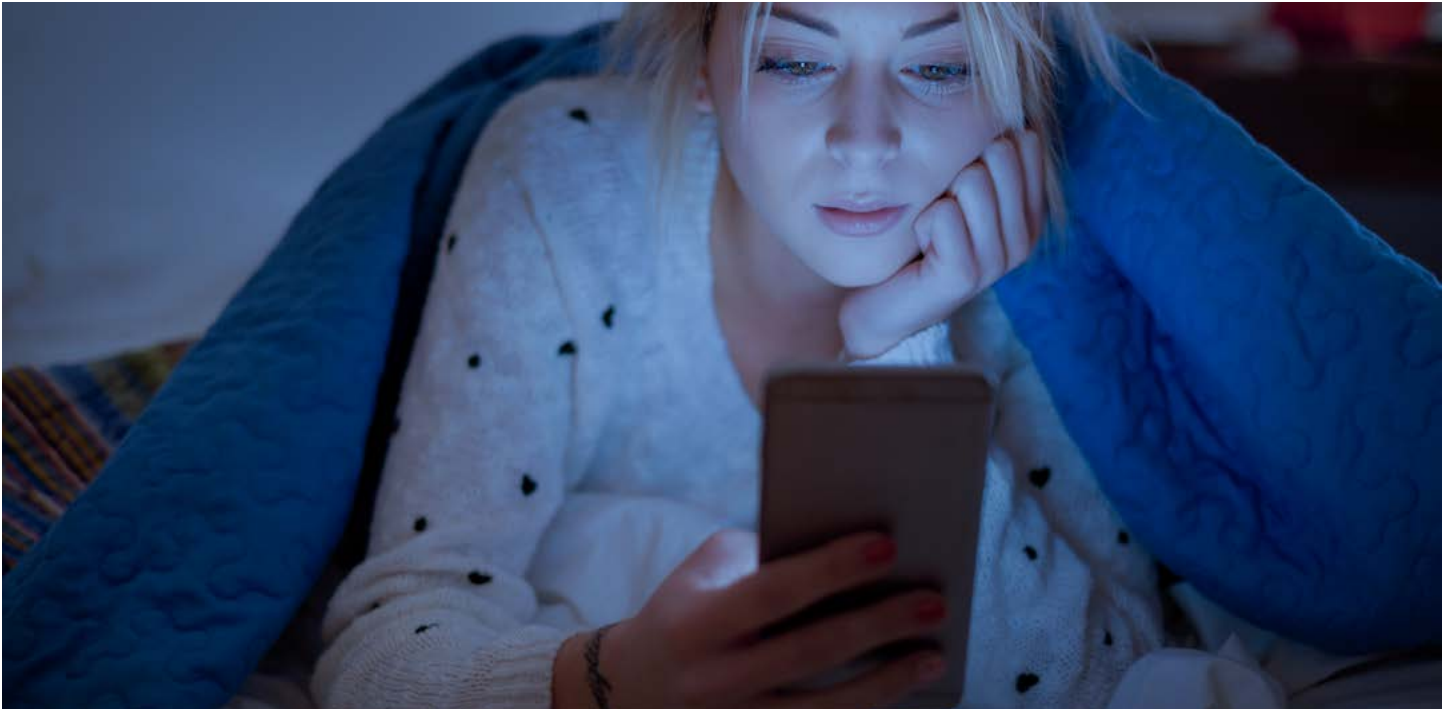
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Youth in Care and Social Media Use

Potentially Dangerous Phone Apps



Introduction

'Apps' or Applications are computer programs that are designed to run on cell phones and tablets. Social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter are popular apps, however there are tons of apps out there that youth are using; some are safe and some are not. Below is a list of apps that can pose potential problems for youth in care.

Live Stream

BIGO LIVE

BIGO is a platform where youth can stream live videos of themselves for other users to see and comment on. They can also send "beans" or virtual gifts to other users that cost real money. BIGO contains a lot of mature content, including predatory or explicit talk in comments from other users.

Live.me

Live.me is a live streaming video app that allows users to watch or broadcast live-stream videos. This means that videos are recorded and seen by other users in "real time" or while things are actually happening. Once users post a video anyone on the app can see and watch their video. Live.me does not feature profiles on its homepage of users under 17 but that does not mean they cannot be found since Live.me uses geolocation of its users to organize videos. There is no way to control privacy settings or location.

Live Random Video Chat

HOLLA

The purpose of HOLLA is to connect with strangers. When users sign up, youth are instantly matched with a stranger to video chat with, and both users appear on camera. They can also enable location services to match with users geographically close to them. Reviews of this app indicate that nudity, masturbation, violence, and negative comments occur frequently on live video chats. Users can also easily lie about their age, and younger youth can be paired with older youth.

Houseparty

Houseparty is a live video and text chat application, that allows users to chat with 2-8 people at a time. All chats are unmonitored, and reviews of the app suggest that cyberbullying, sexual content, and chatting with strangers occurs over the application. The app has a setting so that all conversations can be turned to private mode, but if conversations are not private strangers can join any chat at any time. Caregivers should encourage youth to keep their settings private, to exit conversations if something inappropriate occurs, and to not say or post anything they wouldn't want peers, family members, neighbors, and strangers to see.

Jott Messenger

Jott Messenger allows its users to send messages without a data plan or a WiFi connection. It does this by relying on Bluetooth networks and can only be used with people nearby, making it very popular for young people. Jott takes features from different social media sites and includes the “self-destructing” feature from Snapchat. It is important to remind youth that these pictures never really go away; never send anything you would not want everyone to see.

WeChat

WeChat is a free texting, video, and calling app. WeChat allows users to chat with strangers. There are also features for sharing your location with people nearby.

Kik

Kik is a messaging app and social media site rolled into one. It allows youth to message one another as well as connect to content on the internet. Users can connect with any other user, however new contacts must be approved by your youth and privacy settings can be turned on for the social media portion. Be sure to talk with youth about not accepting messages from people they do not know.

Look

The Look app is a free messaging app that combines live video with text messaging. Look is rated 12+ on the Apple App store for “Infrequent/Mild Sexual Content and Nudity”. Users can also meet and connect with strangers.

Omegle

Omegle is a free online chat website whose slogan is “Omegle: Talk to strangers!” Users are connected to strangers in anonymous text and video chat rooms. **Emerald** is an Omegle alternative and is designed to connect users with people from all over the world.

Best Secrets Folder

This app lets you save photos, videos, and notes in an app disguised as a utility folder. For youth, this app is mostly used to hide inappropriate videos and images. The app goes through great lengths to keep others out: it is password protected, after 4 failed log-in attempts the app will take a picture of the person trying to access the folder and email the date, time, and location of the “intruder”, and includes a record of log-in attempts.

Private Photo Vault

Private Photo Vault is another PIN or pattern protected photo and video folder. Like the Best Secrets Folder app it sends a photo and location of the person attempting to access the folder. However, caregivers should be aware that Private Photo Vault offers users the ability to give people a “dummy code” that when entered shows stock photos.

Secret Calculator

Secret Calculator is a working calculator that hides photos,

videos and URL's. Like the other hidden photo apps mentioned here it is password, touch ID, or pattern protected.

Keepsafe Photo Vault/ Keepsafe Calculator

Keepsafe Photo Vault is another app to hide photos. They also have a decoy calculator version called Keepsafe Calculator-the app functions like a regular calculator but when the correct pin is entered the pictures are shown. The app uses “military grade encryption” to secure photos with a PIN, pattern lock, or fingerprint.

Spotafriend

Spotafriend is designed for teens to help them find friends nearby. Set up exactly like the dating app, Tinder, it shows teens users nearby that once matched can message one another. In its description on Apple, Spotafriend insists it is not a dating app, however it is rated 17+ to download because of Infrequent/Mild Sexual Content and Nudity, Infrequent/Mild Alcohol, Tobacco, or Drug Use or References, Infrequent/Mild Profanity or Crude Humor, and Frequent/Intense Mature/Suggestive Themes.

Tango

The Tango app is a social network and messaging app mainly marketed for Android users. Like other social networking sites make sure location services are turned off, their profiles are on private, and make sure teens do not manually enter their location. Also talk with youth about not accepting calls or messages from numbers they do not know. There is a “popular people” section that showcases popular profiles that youth can click through that may contain some inappropriate content.

Tik Tok

Parents need to know that TikTok is a social network for sharing user-generated music videos. It used to be called musically. Users can create and upload videos, remix others' work, or browse content created by other users and by famous recording artists. However, as of 2019, in response to an FTC settlement, there's a separate section of the app for users under 13. That experience only lets users view curated videos: They can't comment, search, or post their own videos, and their data isn't collected. Because access to that area of the app only requires the user to enter a birthdate, the app is still recommended for older youth. Users often livestream via [LiveMe - Live Video Chat](#), directly interacting with online audiences through chat. Because the app employs popular music, expect swearing and sexual content in the songs. Though the videos viewed during the review process only contained some tight and revealing clothing, some families have encountered sexually suggestive or even explicit material (CommonSenseMedia, <https://www.common SenseMedia.org/app-reviews/tiktok>)

A Warning for Caregivers:

There are sites out there designed to scare caregivers into paying for information or “lessons” about apps and social media. Ask other caregivers if they use these sites and be sure you cannot find the information from a free source before paying.

Ask.fm

Ask.fm is a “question and answer” platform where users can post questions and other users can reply to their questions. Originally designed to help its users improve themselves by asking questions and helping ‘shy’ users by letting them post anonymously, the app has historically been used for cyberbullying. Ask.fm is currently going through a rebranding process trying to shake its cyberbullying reputation, but it still encourages users to set up a public profile and allows anonymous people to communicate with youth.

Whisper

Whisper is a sort of “confessional” where users can anonymously express themselves paired with an image. Users can then message and connect on a post. Users must be at least 17 to download. For younger youth who may not know how much information to share, this app could be dangerous-as predators could take advantage of the situations and feelings expressed by youth on the app.

YOLO: Q & A

There are many popular applications that allow youth to receive anonymous feedback from their peers. YOLO links with Snapchat and allows users to ask questions and give and receive anonymous feedback on what they have posted. Similar applications exist for Instagram and Facebook (**Lipsi, Sarahah, Tellonym**). These apps are often problematic for teens because anonymous feedback has created problems with cyberbullying.

Yubo

Also known as “Tinder for Snapchat,” Yubo is mostly used as a dating app. Users create a profile and “swipe” through profiles of other users in their area. Users only have to be 13 to create a profile however there is no age verification like other apps so younger youth can create accounts. Yubo also links to other social media accounts like Snapchat and Instagram.

BitLife

BitLife is a simulation game that allows users create a profile that they will play from infancy to death. During the game, users can choose how to develop relationships with other pretend profiles, spend time, and make money. The choices users make determine their levels of happiness, health, and appearance. This app is problematic because, though youth don't actually engage in risky behavior, they can experiment with risky ideas (like making their character drink, take drugs, hook up with other characters, or commit crimes).

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Overview

This training is intended to engage social workers in considering how youth in foster care use social media and how social media impacts youth in care. This includes considering the benefits and risks, as well as how social workers can help caregivers keep youth safe on social media sites. This guide includes a background on the current literature, best practices for youth and caregivers, discussion questions, scenarios social workers may face related to social media, and resources for social workers, caregivers, and youth in foster care.

Audience

Social workers and other professionals working directly with caregivers and youth in foster care are the primary audience for this training. It is intended to support social workers and professionals in helping caregivers and youth navigate social media safely.

Training Time

This training should take about 45 minutes to complete.

Training Materials

Print a copy of each of the following training materials for each member of the group.

- Research Summary
- Scenario Activity
- Best Practices for Youth in Care
- Best Practices for Caregivers
- Discussion Questions
- Resources for Youth in Care
- Resources for Caregivers
- Resources for Social workers

Training Outline

Introduction

Begin with introductions. Ask participants to share their name, role in the child welfare system, and what type of tech user they are based on the table on the following page.

Pew Research Center's **10 distinct groups of tech users**

Group name	What you need to know about them
Elite Tech Users	Omnivores They have the most information gadgets and services, which they use voraciously to participate in cyberspace and express themselves online and do a range of Web 2.0 activities such as blogging or managing their own web pages.
	Connectors Between featured-packed cell phones and frequent online use, they connect to people and manage digital content using ICTs-all with high levels of satisfaction about how ICTs let them work with community groups and pursue hobbies.
	Lackluster Veterans They are frequent users of the internet and less avid about cell phones. They are not thrilled with ICT-enabled connectivity.
	Productivity Enhancers They have strongly positive views about how technology lets them keep up with others, do with jobs, and learn new things.
Middle-of-the-road Tech Users	Mobile Centrics They fully embrace the functionality of their cell phones. They use the internet, but not often, and like how ICTs connect them to others.
	Connected But Hassled They have invested in a lot of technology, but they find the connectivity intrusive and information something of a burden.
Few Tech Assets	Inexperienced Experimenters They occasionally take advantage of interactivity, but if they had more experience, they might do more with ICTs.
	Light But Satisfied They have some technology, but it does not play a central role in their daily lives. They are satisfied with what ICTs do for them.
	Indifferents Despite having either cell phones or online access, these users use ICTs only intermittently and find connectivity annoying.
	Off the Network Those with neither cell phones nor internet connectivity tend to be older adults who are content with old media.

• Display the following table for participants, found on the Pew Internet Research site (we recommend not showing the percentages since they can change frequently.):

<http://www.pewinternet.org/2007/05/06/a-typology-of-information-and-communication-technology-users/>

• The Pew Research Center found that most Americans sort into 10 distinct groups of tech users that broadly fit into high, medium, and low categories.

» Knowing the level of social media use among participants will help gauge their level of understanding about certain features of social media sites discussed later in the training. This also helps participants visualize and understand where they themselves fall as a tech user and recognize how diverse tech users can be.

» Individual social media use influences one's perspective on youth social media use. For example if a participant is someone who does not use any social media, they may be less likely to support youth social media use, may have a harder time recognizing its benefits, and may have a harder time discussing simply because the language and functionality is less familiar.

» Encouraging participants to recognize their own social media use and how that impacts their perspective on social media use can be a great way to start the conversation about youth and social media.

Objectives

Go over the objectives of the training with participants. Participants may have a specific question or situation that brought them to the training. Encourage participants to ask questions as you go and remind them there will be time for additional questions at the end. If a question is off topic you may want to defer it until the end of the session.

• At the end of this training, participants will:

- » Understand why youth want to be on social media
- » Learn about the benefits of social media for youth in care
- » Learn about the specific risks that youth in care face online
- » Be prepared to support both youth and caregivers when risks arise on social media

• Have a list of resources for yourself, caregivers, and youth

Background

Begin with the research summary. This document summarizes the current literature on youth in care and social media. It explains the specific benefits and risks these youth gain from social media use. To save time it may be helpful to split into small groups and assign half to read the benefits of social media use and the other half to read the risks of social media use. Allow time for small group decision and then bring everyone back together for a full discussion. The benefits group could start as the benefits can be harder for adults to realize. Encourage participants to remember that the risks and benefits they identify may be different from the benefits and risks youth identify; it is important to recognize both perspectives.

- Ask participants to read through the benefits of social media section of the research summary.
- Go through each point with participants. Ask participants about their own experiences with youth in care for each point:
 - » How do participants feel about social media being a positive tool for youth?
 - » Have they considered any of these benefits before in their work with youth?
 - » Have they experienced youth reporting difficulty accessing technology?
- Ask participants to read through the risks of social media section of the research summary.
- Go through each point with participants. Ask participants about their own experiences with youth in care for each point:
 - » Have they had any experience with these risks and youth in their work? What did they do? Did they know where to turn to for help?
 - » Have they had any experience with unregulated contact online in their work? What did they do? Did they know where to turn for help?
 - » Keep in mind the allotted amount of time for this training activity, if spending more than 15 minutes on this section, ask participants to save additional thoughts or questions for the end.

Scenario Activity

Once you have discussed the risks and benefits of social media and participants' experiences with each in their work, begin the scenario activity.

- If your group has less than 6 people you can do the activity as a large group. Read through each scenario and follow the discussion questions on the Youth in Care and Social Media: A Training Activity sheet.
- If more than six people, break participants into groups of 3-4. Divide the scenarios up between the groups and have

them discuss. Even with smaller groups, each individual participant can choose a scenario that best addresses their concerns. If there's time, discuss additional scenarios as a large group. After small group discussions, come back together as a large group and have each group:

- » Read their scenario aloud.
- » Summarize what their group discussed related to the scenario.
- » Open the conversation up to other participants for comments and discussion.
- The following discussion questions are on the scenario activity handout to help guide small and large group discussions.
 - » What questions would you ask the caregiver and/or youth?
 - » What advice would you give to the youth?
 - » What advice would you give to the caregiver?
 - » How might the youth react to their rules? What other rules could you try?
 - » Are there things the caregivers could have done differently?

Best Practices

After you have gone over the scenarios in the Youth in Care and Social Media: A Training Activity sheet, discuss other situations that emerged in the groups' discussions, share one or both of these handouts: (1) Youth in Care and Social Media: Best Practices for Caregivers, (2) Youth in Care and Social Media: Best Practices for Youth.

- Tailor your training to your audience; use the best practice fact sheets that make most sense.
- Review the best practices guides as a full group, depending on group size, it may be helpful to break into smaller groups or dyads to talk about the discussion questions.

Best Practices-Youth in Care

- If the group is generally unfamiliar with social media sites, you should spend more time discussing the best practices for youth handout. It is important that social workers and other professionals have a general understanding of these guidelines so they are able to support caregivers and youth when problems arise.
- It may be helpful to provide the online links to training participants so that they are able to find and print the resource lists later.
- Discussion questions to support the best practices guide:
 - » *What are some ways to start conversations about social media with youth and share this information?*
 - » *How have you used any of these strategies with youth?*
 - » *What other ideas do you have for monitoring social media use?*

Best Practices-Caregivers

- It may be helpful to provide the online links to participants so that they are able to find and print the resource lists later.
- Some discussion questions for the best practices guide:
 - » *What are some ways to start conversations about social media with caregivers and share this information?*
 - » *How have you used any of these strategies with caregivers?*
 - » *What other ideas do participants have for monitoring social media use?*

Resources

Included in the training guide are resource lists for youth in foster care, caregivers, and social workers. It may be helpful to provide the online links to training participants so that they are able to find and print the resource lists later.

- Participants may have resources they find helpful that are not on these lists. Ask participants if there are any (local or otherwise) resources they have used before and add them to these lists.

Questions and Wrap Up

If time permits, invite participants to ask any specific questions they may have that were not addressed during the training. Thank them for their time. It can help to revisit the objectives of the training stated in the beginning.

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Youth in Care and Social Media Use

Social Media and Child Welfare: A Review of the Literature



Introduction

Twenty-five percent (or 171,162 people) of the United States foster care population is aged fourteen and above (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2018), one year beyond the legal age to have a personal social media account. Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and Instagram all require users to be at least 13 years old. As a result, one in four youth in foster care are old enough to legally create profiles on these social media sites. When youth are online, 44% of teens report being online 'almost constantly' with another 44% being online 'several times a day' (Anderson & Jiang, 2018).

As a result there is a need to understand how to effectively support youth in care in safe and responsible internet and social media use. There is a tremendous need for more research, program development, and resources to support youth in foster care, social workers, and caregivers in navigating social media and other online spaces. To begin to address this gap, the purpose of this literature review was to summarize the existing literature on youth in care and social media use as well as to identify gaps in the literature and opportunities for resource development.

Benefits of Social Media Use

As with all youth, for youth in care, when social media is used safely, the benefits of being online can easily outweigh the risks. For example, in online spaces, youth in care can express themselves and connect with other youth in care to build community based on similar experiences. They can also maintain sanctioned relationships with past family members, social workers, and friends from different schools. Sustaining these relationships can help prevent them from feeling isolated and alone; being able to use social media can help to decrease the digital divide that many youth in care face (this is discussed starting on page 4).

Control their Own Story

In her 2008 paper, "Why Youth <3 (Heart) Social Network Sites" danah boyd discusses how teens lives are heavily structured by parents and laws, making social networking sites an inviting area for teens to cultivate and present themselves, unrestricted by adult rules. Youth in care are no exception and have more aspects of their lives controlled by adults than other teens. Today, 95% of youth have or have access to a smartphone and 88% report having access to a desktop or laptop computer at home.

Youth in care have no control over the families they are placed with or how long they will remain with the family. In addition,



each foster family may have different rules, cultures, and expectations that youth are required to follow. Social workers and agencies maintain files and records on every aspect of youth in care's lives that youth might not see until they age out of care, or they must go through a lengthy process to access those files. It is possible that youth in care would have several different social workers building these records during their time in care (Gustavsson & MacEachron, 2008). Information about youth can get lost in this process, or youth might not be able to ask a former social worker for information about events from previous placements (such as trips a foster family took together). It is no surprise then that these youth are turning to social media and other platforms, such as videos and blogs, for self-expression and a chance to present themselves in a way they can control. Social media can help youth in care feel a sense of normalcy and fit in with their peers (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2017).

Maintain Connections

Social media can help youth in care maintain connections and social ties with family and friends they are no longer seeing regularly (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2017).

The longer youth are in care, the more likely they are to be moved to multiple placements (Gustavsson & MacEachron, 2008). With each move, youth may face a new school, new caregivers, and possibly new foster siblings. It can be difficult for youth to keep track of the different places they have been and the connections they have made. These moves and lost connections have resulted in one-third of youth in care reporting that they felt lonely while in care (Shin & Poertner, 2002).

To help combat this loneliness and maintain connections, youth in care are turning to social media. Social media can allow youth to build and maintain relationships with biological family, friends, previous caregivers, social workers, and other foster siblings. Having these online relationships could help youth in foster care feel less alone and connect with other youth in care who share similar experiences (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2017; Schimmel-Bristow & Ahrens, 2018). This online social support may act as a protective or moderating factor to protect youth, making them less likely than those without this type of social support to become victims online. Whittle, Hamilton-Giachrisis, Beech, and Collings (2013) identified a list of possible risk and protective factors for online grooming (grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or trafficking), among those protective factors were high self-esteem, social support, and high life satisfaction.

Decrease the Digital Divide

A challenge facing many youth in foster care is that of the digital divide, or the gap between those with and without access to information and communication technologies (Finn & Kerman, 2004, 2005; Finn, Kerman, & LeCornec, 2005; Gustavsson & MacEachron, 2015; Roche, Vaterlaus, & Young, 2015). Information and communication technologies include cell phones, tablets, and computers; items youth in care often have very limited access to. Results from three longitudinal studies found that only 5% of rural and 21% of urban youth in foster care in California have consistent reliable access to a computer at home (Goldbach, 2016). If a foster family is able to provide these technologies for their youth, or if youth are able to access them at local libraries or schools, their access might temporarily be high. However, youth in foster care are frequently moved and relocated, with no promise of access in their new homes, schools, or communities.

The Casey Family Services Building Skills-Building Futures Information Technology Program (BSBF) was designed to help combat the digital divide among youth in foster care. This program provided 34 foster families with computers, internet connection, and supportive services. After a year in the program, results showed that those families who received the technology and computer training, used the technology more and felt more comfortable using it, as compared to foster families who were not in the program (Finn et al., 2005). Parents in the program felt that the BSBF program was, "improving children's computer skills, grades, homework, ability to find information on the internet, and interest in IT careers" (Finn et al., 2005, p. 477). Currently, only 3% of youth in care graduate with a degree from a four-year college (Courtney et al., 2011), making it extremely important that we provide youth in care with the tools needed to successfully transition to higher education or the workforce. Providing youth in care more consistent online access can help them catch up to and not fall behind other youth who are regularly using online tools.

Risks of Social Media Use

Although social media can provide several benefits to youth in foster care; youth in foster care also face additional challenges not experienced by other youth, and are at greater risk of experiencing negative outcomes (Mitchell, Finkelhor, & Wolak, 2007a, 2007b; Wells & Mitchell, 2008). There are strict controls over the information that can be shared about youth in care and sharing too much information online can be dangerous. Predators may take advantage of these youth's vulnerability and pretend to be someone youth think they can confide in and trust (Whittle et al., 2013). In addition, youth in care are also at risk of being found online by biological family members they have restricted contact with (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2017). As a result, caregivers face many challenges when it comes to monitoring the online behaviors of youth in care (Badillo-Urquiola, Ghosh, & Wisniewski, 2017).

Safety Online

Previous research on youth who have experienced offline victimization or have experienced high levels of parental conflict, suggests that these populations deserve special attention when it comes to internet safety and use (Wells & Mitchell, 2008). Youth in foster care in particular, disproportionately experience many of the risk factors associated with participation in dangerous online behaviors. These risk factors include maltreatment, physical or sexual abuse, and high levels of parental conflict (Mitchell et al., 2007a, 2007b; Noll et al., 2013; Wells & Mitchell, 2008). As a result, youth in foster care are at higher risk than other internet users for inappropriate contact with others (Mitchell, Finkelhor, & Wolak, 2007a, 2007b; Wells & Mitchell, 2008), being targeted by child predators (Noll et al., 2013), and being victims of cyberbullying (The Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2017). However, high-quality parenting and parental monitoring has been found to moderate adolescent risk factors for participating in dangerous online behaviors (e.g., looking at sexual images, having or creating sexually provocative social media profiles, and engaging in online sexual solicitations; Noll et al., 2013). Therefore, it is extremely important that we not only educate youth in care, caregivers, and social workers on the specific risks youth face online, but also teach ways to help youth remain safe online.

Unregulated Parental Contact

Some youth have protective orders preventing their biological parents or other family members from communicating with them. As a result, some caregivers and social workers are worried that allowing youth in care on social media and access to private message features for example, may enable them to be found by their biological families and may facilitate communication with family members youth are not supposed to be in contact with (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2017). Unregulated contact leaves youth vulnerable to the potential for re-victimization; social media may give youth in foster care a false sense of reunification with their birth families—limiting their ability to make a connection with their foster family

(Albertson et al., 2016). However, simply banning youth in care from using social media because of these fears is not the answer. Instead, caregivers and social workers need to create nonjudgmental and accepting environments for youth, seeking to understand why youth may want this contact with family members. Creating this space allows youth to feel comfortable approaching caregivers and social workers to discuss appropriate contact and inappropriate contact if it does occur (Simpson, 2013).

Monitoring youth in care online presents unique challenges for caregivers (Badillo-Urquiola, Harpin, & Wisniewski, 2017). Many caregivers are not sure how to even begin monitoring online behavior and what they should be looking for if they were to monitor online behavior; this has been attributed to the generation gap between caregivers and youth and caregivers lack of understanding of the media youth are using (Alberson et al., 2017). Some caregivers reported that even if they were familiar with a certain type of media it would be impossible to control due to the variety of ways it is accessed by youth; at school, the library, mobile phones, or on a peer's computer or device (Alberson et al., 2017). Some caregivers have described not attempting to regulate online behavior because the youth owned the device (such as cell phone or computer) and caregivers felt they could not control or take away devices that the youth or someone else had paid for (Badillo-Urquiola et al., 2017b).

Conclusion

Protecting youth in foster care online is a unique challenge for both social workers and caregivers. Traditional approaches to protecting youth online rely heavily on a parent-child relationship in which youth and parents feel comfortable and safe truthfully discussing online behaviors. For youth in care, this approach may not be as successful because of their past history of trauma and abuse with adults (Badillo-Urquiola et al., 2017a). Youth in care may not have had the opportunity to build trusting relationships with adults, both in and outside of foster care, either due to abuse/neglect from biological family members or frequent placement changes. Consequently, youth in care may never feel comfortable opening up to caregivers and social workers about their lives online; relying on youth to come forward when they run into trouble online might not be the best practice with this population. Therefore, it is essential that guidelines, trainings, and resources be developed to support the many individuals working in support of youth in care, to help keep them safe online. Several interventions already mentioned, have begun to look at youth in care internet safety from a new angle. However, more outreach and engagement work is needed to support not only youth in care but also social workers and families.

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Youth in Care and Social Media Use

Texting Abbreviations to Watch For



Introduction

Abbreviating words or phrases can help facilitate quick communication. Some texting abbreviations seem to have become words of their own, for example LOL (laugh out loud) has become such a popular texting abbreviation that it is used on

a variety of social networking sites. However, not all texting abbreviations are as apparent as LOL and it can seem like foster teens are speaking a different language. Below is a list of texting abbreviations that could signal something is going on that you should be concerned about.

F2F Offering to video chat or meet in person	8 It means "ate". It refers to oral sex.	Sugarpic Sexually suggestive or erotic picture
MOS Mom over shoulder	GNOC Get naked on cam, mostly used in chat rooms by "pedos"	Erotic, nude or suggestive images sent to an online friend, usually via instant message or email.
S2R Send to receive (pictures)	P911 Parent alert	LMIRL Let's meet in real life
KMS Kill myself	"Parents are here! Don't type something you wouldn't want them to see."	IRL In real life
KYS Kill yourself	PIR Parent in room	TDTM Talk dirty to me
CD9 / Code 9 It means parents are around. "If your parents are around and you don't want them to see or know what you are texting, or putting on a website like fb, you send cd9 to alert them not to say or put anything that could get you into trouble!"	Used while kids are in online chat rooms/IM services and parents are in the room.	LH6 Let's Have Sex
9 Parent watching "When you're on IM or texting and a parent or other bothersome person is breathing down your neck, type '9' and the person who you are talking to will understand and switch to a different, more boring topic, like school or work."	IWSN I want sex now	I&I Intercourse and intoxication
	NIFO Naked in front of computer	IPN I'm posting naked
	CU46 See you for sex, Used in texting	LM46 Let's meet for sex
	53X Sex	LHU Let's hook up
	420 Marijuana	PEN15 Stands for penis

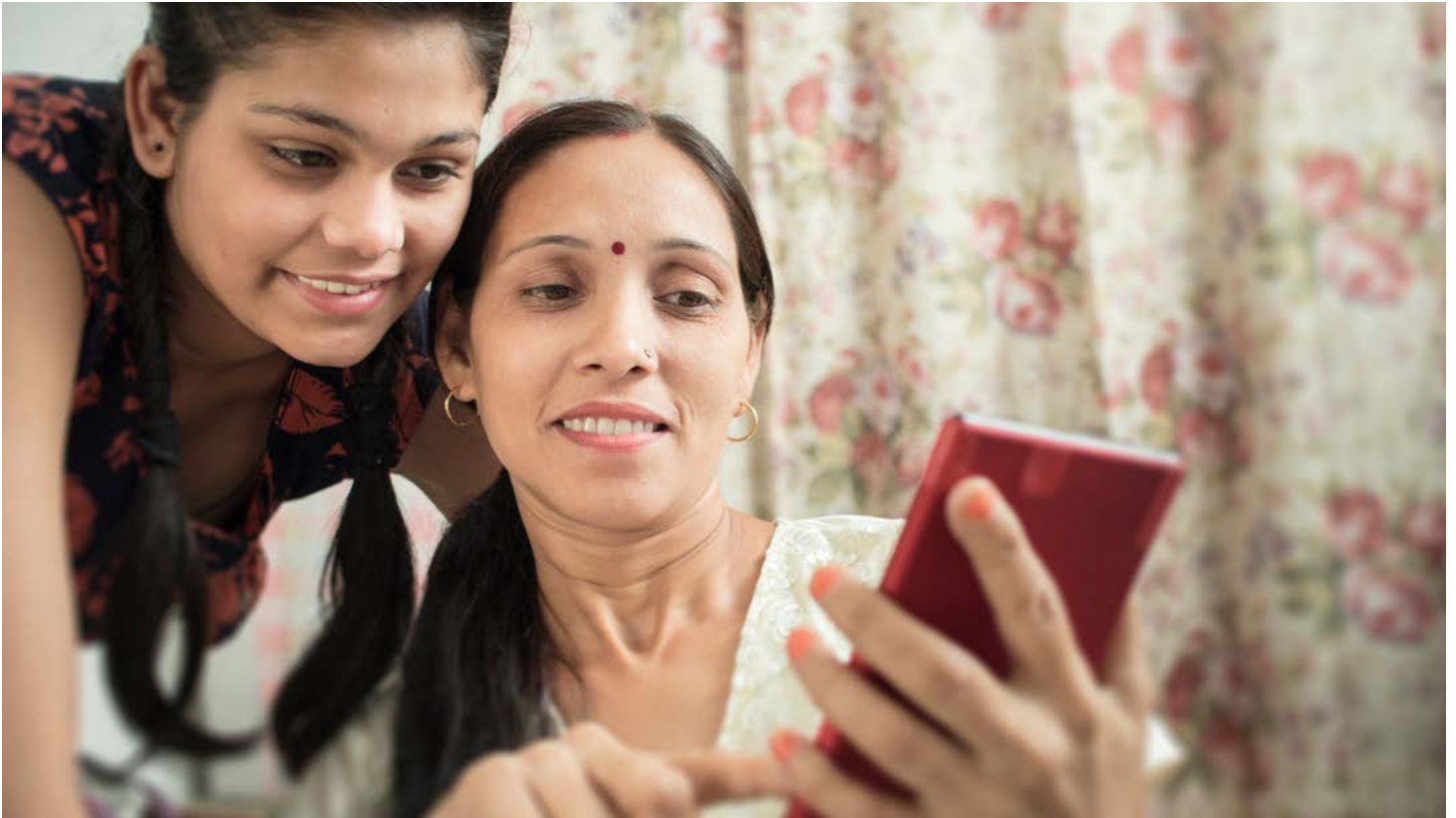
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Youth in Care and Social Media Use

Resources for Caregivers



Web Articles/ Websites

Embrella, Embracing & Empowering Families: Founded in 1972 and incorporated in 1974, embrella, formerly Foster and Adoptive Family Services, is the leading statewide advocacy agency for foster, adoptive and kinship parents in NJ. Their mission is to provide advocacy and enriching programs and services to empower families and youth to thrive.

- **How to protect my foster child on social media**
<http://foster-adoptive-kinship-family-services-nj.org/how-to-protect-my-foster-child-on-social-media/>
- **A Foster Parent's Guide to Teen Social Media Privacy 2016**
<http://foster-adoptive-kinship-family-services-nj.org/protecting-social-media-teens-2016/>
- **Social media confidentiality for children in care FAQ**
https://www.fafsonline.org/fact_sheets/social-media-kyi.pdf

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Umbrella, Embracing & Empowering Families: Founded in 1972 and incorporated in 1974, umbrella, formerly Foster and Adoptive Family Services, is the leading statewide advocacy agency for foster, adoptive and kinship parents in NJ. Their mission is to provide advocacy and enriching programs and services to empower families and youth to thrive.

- **How to protect my foster child on social media**
<http://foster-adoptive-kinship-family-services-nj.org/how-to-protect-my-foster-child-on-social-media/>
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Journal Articles

Albertson, K. M., Moreno, M. A., Garrison, M. M., Evans, Y. N., & Ahrens, K. R. (2017). Impacts of media on sexual behaviour and relationships among youth in foster care. *Child & Family Social Work*, (December 2016), 88–96. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cfs.12387>

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Finn, J., & Kerman, B. (2004). The Use of Online Social Support by Foster Families. *Journal of Family Social Work.* https://doi.org/10.1300/J039v08n04_04

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